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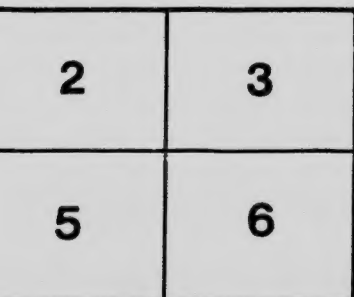
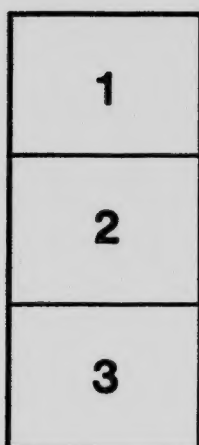
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Manitoba Agricultural College
Winnipeg, - - - Canada

POULTRY DEPARTMENT

Fattening Chickens for the Market

Why Chickens should be Fattened

Our farmers all realize the importance of properly fattening beef, pork and mutton before the animals are marketed, the same importance should be attached to fattening poultry for the market. By far the greater part of the poultry produced in the Province is turned off by the producer in the unfinished state. A thin bird is not at all attractive when dressed; the flesh appears shrunken and hard, the bones prominent, the skin thin and more or less shrivelled. When prepared for table use the meat of such a bird is generally dry and tough. A well fattened bird has a neat, attractive appearance. The meat is tender, juicy, of good flavor, and of the best quality.

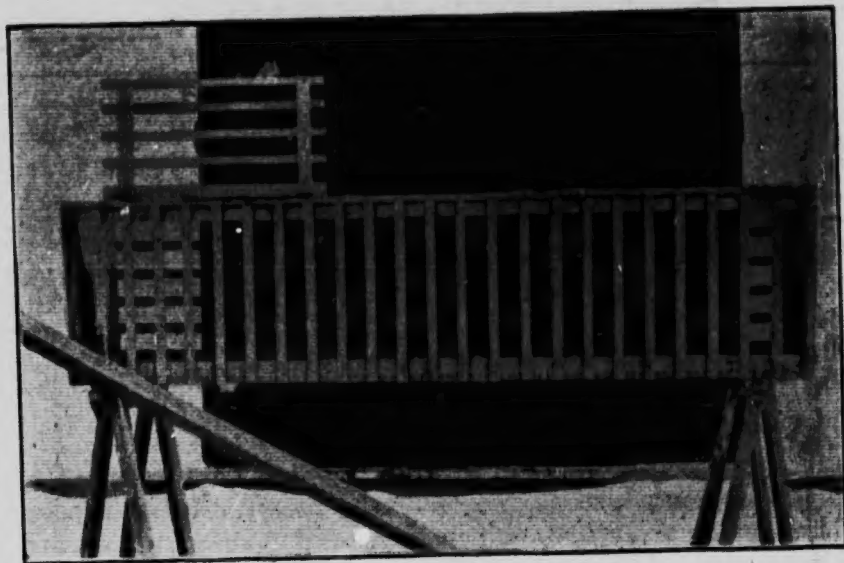
The young birds grown on the farms are usually disposed of when they have reached marketable size, or at the end of the season, in whatever condition they happen to be. The holiday season generally brings in a large supply of dressed poultry, but the greater part of it lacks in finish and in quality.

For properly finishing chickens for the market all that is necessary is that the birds be separated from the others a few weeks before the time when they are to be disposed of, and that in the interval they should be kept more closely confined and fed entirely on fattening foods.

The Fattening Crate

The simplest way of properly fattening chickens is to place them in a fattening crate. The crate should be six feet long, sixteen inches wide and eighteen inches high. The bottom, back and top are slatted lengthwise, and in front the slats are placed on upright. On the bottom they are an inch and a quarter apart, and on the back, top and front two inches apart. The slats are seven-eighths of an inch wide, and five eighths of an inch thick. The crate is divided into three compartments, and each one opens up separately by a hinged top. A trough for feed is placed

on strips in front. The crate is strengthened by having slats three-quarters of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide in each corner of the crate, running lengthwise. The ends and the partitions can also be made of solid wood in order to strengthen the crate. Ordinary inch mesh wire nailed to the bottom of the crate will answer the purpose of a floor better than a slatted bottom, as there will be less accumulation of droppings, therefore making the crate more sanitary.



Breeds best adapted for Fattening

The breeds of chicken best adapted for fattening purposes are the Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes, Rhode Island Reds, and the Orpingtons. All these breeds, or any variety of these, will do well when placed in a fattening crate. They produce meat and lay on fat very economically, and dress out neat, plump, and desirable carcasses for table use. The cockerels of any of these breeds, when taken at three and a half to four months of age will usually gain from a pound to a pound and a half in three weeks time. As they get older the amount of food required to make a pound of gain increases very rapidly, and crate fattening will not be very profitable after the birds are six months old. Strong, vigorous and healthy birds will always make better gains than those lacking in vigor and vitality.

The heavier breeds like Cochins, Brahmas and Langshans will not give very satisfactory results when fattened, as they do not with-

stand close confinement as well as the utility breeds, nor will they make as economic gains. The lighter breeds are too small to fatten as roasters, and will very seldom show enough gains to warrant taking time to fatten them.

What and How to Feed

Place twelve cockerels in each crate—four in each compartment, first dusting them thoroughly with some reliable insect powder. They should not be fed anything for the first twenty-four hours after they are crated, in order that all the whole grain in their crops may be digested first. The best grains for fattening purposes are oats and corn. All the grain fed should be in the finest state possible in order to aid digestion and assimilation.

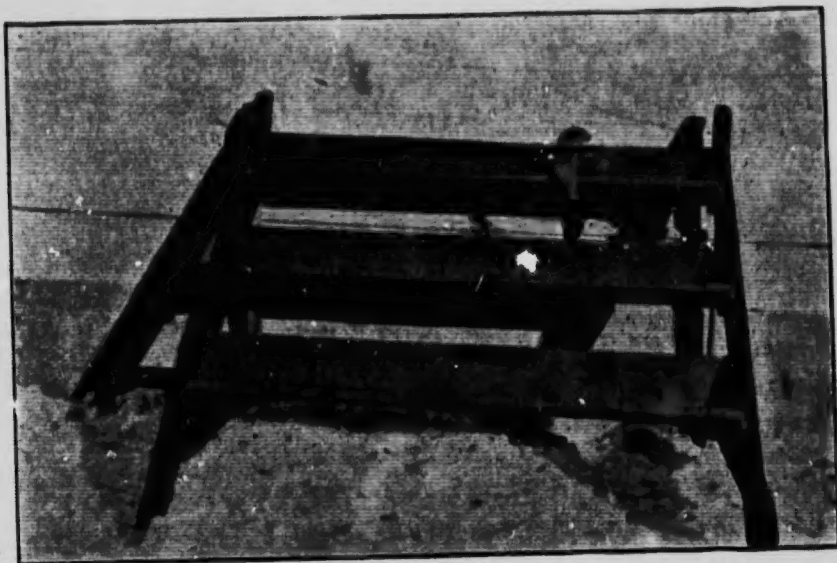
One of the simplest fattening rations can be made by taking two parts of oats, one of wheat, and one of barley, grinding them up as fine as possible, and sifting out the hulls. To this is added buttermilk or sour milk sufficient to make it of the consistency to pour nicely. Another good fattening ration may be made by using two parts of oat feed, one part cornmeal, and one part low grade flour, mixed with milk the same as the above ration.

When feeding chicken in a fattening crate care must be taken not to feed too heavy in the beginning. An ounce of the dry mash per bird per meal is sufficient for a start. Feed this quantity twice a day for two days, then increase at the rate of three ounces to each crate of chickens at each feeding meal, until the birds are on a full ration, which is usually about twenty-five to thirty ounces to the crate twice a day. These weights refer to the mash before it is mixed with milk. It will require almost half as much again of milk to make the feed the proper consistency, depending of course on the thickness of the milk.

Never leave any feed in the trough longer than thirty minutes. Give them grit or coarse sand to eat once a week. They should be fattened for three or four weeks, depending on the condition they were in before being put in crates. The heaviest gains are usually made the second week. After that the gains, in proportion to the amount of food consumed, become less and less; it seldom pays to fatten them after the fourth week.

How to Kill and Dress for the Market

A day or two before the birds are killed they should again be dusted for lice. They should also be starved for eighteen hours before they are killed. Kill by bleeding and sticking, or by dislocating the neck. By the former method the carcass will look better and keep longer. The birds should be dry plucked, leaving a few feathers on the neck, on the tips of the wings, and on the hocks. The wings should be folded on the back, the legs and feet washed and drawn up close to the breast bone. All blood should be washed off the head, and the carcass pressed into a blocky shape. After



being properly cooled and pressed the heads should be wrapped in thin paper, and the birds packed in a paper lined box. There are different methods of packing dressed poultry, but the one we prefer is to pack a dozen in each box, having them two layers deep with their backs to the top of the box. On opening a crate of poultry packed in this way the dealer can see at a glance the condition of the birds. The size of the box will depend largely on the size and age of the birds.

Information on a phase of poultry work will be given free of charge and all questions pertaining to poultry will be cheerfully answered.

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